

was hitherto unrepresented, and for furnishing the necessary information on its locality, date of collection and the circumstances under which the specimen was collected.

GOVERNMENT MUSEUM,
EGMORE, MADRAS-8,
December 1, 1969.

S. T. SATYAMURTI
Director of Museums, Madras

6. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF SWINHOE'S SNIPE, *CAP-ELLA MEGALA* (SWINHOE) NEAR BOMBAY, AND A NOTE ON ITS IDENTIFICATION

On 7th December 1947, while shooting with Dr. Sálím Ali on the lower portion (c. 300') of Cathedral Rock, near Kalyan, Bombay, we put up two snipe out of tall rushes on the edge of terrace paddy. In flight they appeared much heavier and darker than either Pintail (*C. stenura*) or Fantail (*C. gallinago*). We preserved the less damaged one, believing it to be Swinhoe's [*C. megala* (Swinhoe)] which has been recorded in eastern and southern India but not so far north-west. It was sent to the British Museum, but was identified by Sir Norman Kinnear as a Pintail (*C. stenura*).

In the course of cataloguing the collection recently, I found this specimen (No. 14938) listed among *C. gallinago*. The notes on the label prompted me to re-compare this with the Pintails and, as the tail (originally noted to have 22 feathers with the central pair in moult, and a part of which is preserved) definitely lacked the more pin-like feathers on the outside, I sent the skin to Dr. Dillon Ripley who agrees that it is Swinhoe's Snipe (*C. megala*).

This extends the accepted winter range of the species north-west of Madras, Mysore, and Kerala.

In 1934, La Personne (*JBNHS* 37 : 734) stated that Swinhoe's Snipe could be distinguished from the Pintail by its bastard wing being 20 mm. or longer as against 17 or less in the latter. Stuart Baker confirmed the difference and suggested diagnostic limits of over 19 mm. for Swinhoe's and under 19 mm. for the Pintail. This is repeated in subsequent literature including *IND. HANDBOOK* (2 : 285), but the spike-like and longest feather in the bastard wing only measures 15-18 mm. in this and six other specimens in the Society's collection and does not appear to be any longer than in the Pintail.

This species resembles the Pintail in the shape of the bill tip, the barring on the underwing, and the absence of the broad white tips to the secondaries, and the only consistent differences appear to be:

- (a) the absence of the pinfeathers at the side of the tail,

(b) a slightly longer wing (135-144, cf. 128-137), and

(c) a longer tail (52-60, cf. 44-50).

The last character does not appear to have been noticed before but is very consistent.

75, ABDUL REHMAN STREET,
BOMBAY-3,

HUMAYUN ABDULALI

January 9, 1970.

7. OCCURRENCE OF THE GREAT SNIPE, *CAPELLA MEDIA* (LATHAM) IN BURMA AND INDIA

Only three records of the Great Snipe [*Capella media* (Latham)] have been accepted from peninsular India and, though it is said to have been obtained in Ceylon and the Andamans, it has not been recorded from Burma. It may therefore be interesting to note that in the course of cataloguing the Society's collection, we found 9 birds of this species listed as *Capella gallinago* (Linnaeus). Six of them are from Iraq and Persia but, in addition to one from near Bangalore collected by Capt. A. Boxwell on 28th October 1910 (the label now reads: "Capt. A. Boxall, 2 December 1910") and which is one of the three records referred to above, there are two more, from Walmer, Nilgiris, and Moulmein, Burma.

The first of these two specimens was collected by Phythian-Adams and is marked as received in November 1933. It was no doubt sent to the Society as it appeared different from the Common Snipe but was apparently marked *C. gallinago* by one of the Society's assistants and the identification not checked upon subsequently. This forms the fourth record from India.

The Burmese bird was collected at Moulmein by W. A. W. Dawn but the label bears no date. This also was marked as the Common Snipe and has been overlooked for many years. Mr. Dawn was elected a member of the Society on 28 February 1899, a fact which gives some indication of the date of collection.

In addition to the longer wing the additional amount of white on three of the outermost tail-feathers is very distinctive. The sketch in IND. HANDBOOK (reproduced from BR. HANDBOOK) represents this correctly but reference is made to the Key in the FAUNA which refers to the black base to the feathers and implies that the distal portion is pure white and without the black bars. The Key in IND. HANDBOOK (2 : 278) perhaps needs another correction, for it specifies a wing under 150 mm. The